

Scott Ritter: Iran's 'Carrier K*ller' Missile DESTROYS US Navy

Former US Marine Intel Officer and Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter cuts through the noise about Iran's new ship sinking missile and reacts to the US foreign policy establishment panic over the increasingly failing US naval blockade, plus gives an update on all fronts of US war on Iran, Russia and beyond. Support Scott's work: <https://scottritter.substack.com/> PATREON.COM /DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iranwar #iran #trump

#Danny

Welcome back to the show. As you can see, I'm joined by former U.S. Marine Corps intelligence officer and weapons inspector and current geopolitical analyst Scott Ritter. To go over the latest developments, we begin, Scott, with Iranian reports now cited by the Associated Press confirming that U.S. warships, including the USS George Washington, were targeted this weekend. According to this report, it says that this new ballistic missile shows Iran will take preemptive action. And here they talk about how Monday's report by Iran said that this missile, the Qassam Basir, marks a turning point in Iran's defense strategy. It describes it as having far more accuracy than others and a half-ton warhead that can go 1,200 kilometers.

And Scott, I'm just wondering, could you talk about the significance of this missile? There were three Iranian tankers that were hit after this incident, and then Iran ended up hitting six, according to reports. There are some who say the U.S. will strike tonight based on not only this incident, but also continued activity in the Strait of Hormuz. Help us understand what this missile is and how does it change the calculus of how the U.S. is conducting this blockade? Iran is now announcing that it has plans to enforce an exclusionary zone in the Strait of Hormuz all the way up until the blockade line on violating ships, including U.S. naval vessels. What's your thoughts on this?

#Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, I don't know anything more about this missile than what the Iranians have said. They say they fired it against the George Washington and its escort ships, and that this missile somehow had a big impact. But I haven't seen any reports of an American ship being hit yet. You know, did it maneuver? Did they shoot the missile down? Did the missile land harmlessly away from

the ship? I don't know. I mean, I need a heck of a lot more information from the Iranians as to why this missile is suddenly a game changer. I know it has more range. I know that it has a larger warhead, therefore more destructive capability.

You know, maybe the George—you know, the George Washington has probably been operating outside the range of, you know, previous efforts to interdict it by Iranian cruise missiles and drones. And so maybe this missile did say that you're not safe where you're at, that we can still impact, that it's going to cause the George Washington to pull back even further, because if this missile impacted anywhere near or had any threat of guiding onto the aircraft carrier, you can't have a carrier launching and recovering airplanes while under attack. And so we don't like to have our carriers have to make evasive maneuvers while they're supposed to be recovering aircraft.

So, you know, I need to know more. And, of course, the United States is being tight-lipped about this, other than saying, you know, that no ships were hit. But I need to know more. But I think what we're looking at here is a missile now with greater range, greater destructive capacity, that is pushing the George Washington out of an area of, you know, operations where they thought they could launch and recover aircraft comfortably. And now they have to push back even further, which means that any aircraft that are launched will have to go through one or more refueling cycles before they can be used effectively in combat over Iran or the Strait of Hormuz or elsewhere.

#Danny

Yeah, well, we can follow up on this too. In the report that came out from Rosai, General Rosai, the head of the Supreme National Security Council, he said this. He said this is the first time we tested. He framed it as a test of an anti-ship missile above the American warship, and it created hell for Americans. They ended up fleeing. So that's what we know, is that there were and there are reports of evasive maneuvers having been done by George Washington. So it doesn't look like any direct impact.

I think I wanted your comments also on the fact that, you know, the United States is completely rejecting that Iran has control of the Strait of Hormuz. They're saying the U.S. CENTCOM has complete control. But oil prices are getting very high, and this announcement by Iran now of almost like a parallel blockade in and of itself of ships that the U.S. is trying to push through—what do you make of this, and whether these capabilities will play a factor in making this situation even more crisis-ridden for the U.S. side of the blockade?

#Scott Ritter

Well, again, when we talk about this missile, understand what it does is, you know, the U.S. blockade has never been, as Donald Trump likes to portray it on a map, you know, a solid wall of naval steel connecting the Iranian coast with, you know, the Yemeni coast. You've got this steel barrier, and everything that comes in gets caught in this steel barrier. It's a total—there's always

been a gap along the Iranian coast. You know, the United States has been able to manage that gap, or at least try to manage that gap with, you know, interdiction through air. But now with this missile, you're driving the ships even further. So there's an even bigger gap.

It means that this blockade has reduced even further the effectiveness of this blockade. So that's a big thing. The United States has been talking about U.S. naval control over the Strait of Hormuz, and that's just a gross exaggeration. There are some reports that Navy SEALs are operating, and the Navy SEALs can, again, come into the Strait of Hormuz through the United Arab Emirates. They can launch their capability. It's not as though a U.S. naval warship is sailing through the Strait of Hormuz and dropping SEALs out there. They're coming in underwater, and they're using covert infiltration tactics to try and find Iranian mines and then to blow up the mines.

But that doesn't mean that you control the Strait of Hormuz. It means that U.S. Navy SEALs are operating in a covert fashion underneath, under the water. The Iranians control the Strait of Hormuz. They control it directly and indirectly. Directly, they've proven this by sinking ships or hitting ships, targeting ships that seek to run it. Indirectly, it's very difficult to find people who insure ships trying to run the Strait of Hormuz. No one's going to put through a giant supertanker loaded up with liquid natural gas or oil, and no one's going to insure that cargo. So they just keep the ships off. So I think, once again, this proves that Iran has the upper hand. And this is an unsustainable conflict for the United States.

No matter what escalation Trump wants to do, he'll never be able to escalate to a point of decision. You know, a couple of interesting things happened in relation to this. The U.S. Navy has acknowledged it's not going back to Bahrain anytime soon, if ever. Bahrain's dead. That was the headquarters of the Fifth Fleet. I used to spend a lot of time in Bahrain. I've been to the Manama base. Yeah, that's the thing. It's over too. Hegseth has been talking about the ability to sustain this conflict, and yet there was a dissent that was put forward by, you know, a majority of the chiefs of the different services and the commander of European Command, Pacific Command, Southern Command, saying that, you know, if you keep pushing what's going on in the Middle East, you'll make us unable to do our job anywhere else in the world. And so they're dissenting against the positive spin that Hegseth is trying to put on this situation.

They're not coming back to Bahrain. So, you know, the fact is, no matter what Trump does, understand that, you know, it's never going to—we're never going to be able to do, at least anytime soon, what we did at the beginning of this war. And what we did at the beginning of this war wasn't good enough. So the Iranians are just getting better. They're the ones deploying new long-range systems that cause us to change. We're not doing anything. We fire weapons that hit wedding parties. Yeah, we're good at that. And we're out of these weapons. All these new weapons we brought in, we don't have them anymore. So I think the escalation is just, you know, for political—it's a political ploy just to be seen as responding to something the Iranians did. But there's no real escalation. We're not really putting pressure on the Iranians at all.

#Danny

Yeah, and I found striking, too, what Mohsen Rezaei also said in the latest interview in this report about this incident, was that he said one of the main reasons Iran isn't just sinking tankers every single day to a high degree, or targeting the warships as well escorting them, is because of the environmental hazards. Actually, Iran has cited how hazardous it is for oil to be completely, you know, just spilled upon the Strait of Hormuz, the coastlines of both Iran and Oman. Not ideal. So this is also part of the—this is something the United States is pushing and trying to provoke. But nevertheless, Iran, as you said, it does continue to improve, and it showed this also today. There have been reports that maybe the U.S. will strike tonight because it has—I don't know if you know anything about this, Scott.

These MQ-1 drones—two of them have been downed in the last 12 hours or so by Iran. And here's some of the footage that was released by Iran about this, which indicates—some have said it might indicate—that the United States is doing reconnaissance for some kind of strike event. I don't know if that's true or not, but again, these are the reports that we get almost every single day now. It's Iran asserting itself against the United States in many ways. You heard Pete Hegseth. He said, "Well, it's a tanker for a tanker now." And now, when Iran has tried to strike U.S. naval vessels, the response is hitting Iranian tankers, which doesn't seem necessarily proportionate. But your thoughts on this?

#Scott Ritter

It's an unsustainable model. You know, the drones, MQ-1s, MQ-9s, we've lost a quarter of our total fleet globally. And, you know, we haven't done anything to improve their life cycle in the region. Sinking a tanker for a tanker, that's not going to advance anything. It's not going to solve any of the problems. The problem, I mean, there's a lot of people right now that tend to believe that we just have to wait for the Iranian economy to collapse. And when the Iranian economy collapses, the Iranian people will rise up and... And let's just make it clear here: it's the United States that will collapse before the Iranian economy collapses. Iran's already shown an ability to sustain pain beyond what anybody in the West could possibly manage. Yes, there's rampant inflation. Yes, they have a currency crisis. Yes, all that. But Iran's not going anywhere soon.

We assassinated their supreme leader. And the people have rallied around their government unlike any rallying around a government has ever taken place before in modern history. So, you know, Iran's not moving anywhere. In the United States, you know, support for Trump is bleeding away because of high gas prices. It's only going to get worse if he keeps playing this tanker-for-tanker stupidity. So, you know, this is an unsustainable model that the Trump administration is engaged in, and they're desperate to find an off-ramp. Remember, it was the Iranian Speaker of the Parliament, who's also their lead negotiator, when going to Iraq recently, said that Iran is aware of the fact that the United States, the Trump administration, is looking for an elegant face-saving mechanism to get out of this war. And so it's Iran's job to help them find one.

#Danny

Right. And, yeah, the reports about the oil prices are not good. Crude is up to about \$100 a barrel and rising. And this also has to do with Yemen, too. Yemen has gone ballistic, for lack of a better term, on Saudi oil and across southern Saudi Arabia overnight. There have been a barrage of attacks. And there's also this report from 19FortyFive, which is conducted by actually quite a mainstream analyst. And he kind of made the point you made about Iran getting better.

He said shooting at an aircraft carrier may not be the same as hitting one, but Iran has worked the first part out, and saying that this attack over the weekend demonstrates that Iran is figuring things out and, as you said, getting better. So that doesn't portend very good things, especially for a blockade, Scott, that, as you said, is causing massive calamity on the oil markets. Diesel is now, what, \$5.85 a gallon and not going down at a time of the year that's unprecedented. Your thoughts on this? Yeah, I mean, diesel—this is the time of year where crops need to come in.

#Scott Ritter

You have those giant combines out there. They use diesel. We're heading into the Christmas holiday season, where stores are starting to stock up on Christmas goods. Orders are going out. But when stuff shows up in the port, probably most of it's made in China, but when it piles up in the ports, we need trucks to basically transport, you know, drive it around and deliver it around the country. And that process has to begin now. And if diesel is that expensive, it means the prices are all going to be—you know, the truckers aren't going to just eat the diesel. It's going to be passed on to the consumer of the products. All the prices are going to go up. And the less diesel there is, the more of a crisis there is. And at some point in time, trucks stop driving because it's not profitable for them.

And then, you know, Tommy has a bad Christmas because he's not getting the new Xbox, whatever version, whatever. And mommy and daddy's unhappy. And you don't want to have mommy and daddy unhappy because Tommy didn't get his Xbox and then go to the voting booth and say, you know, ask the question, "Were we better off today than we were a year ago?" Today, the answer is no, we aren't better off today than we were a year ago. So Trump has a problem. This economic crisis is going to have a political problem for him in November. You know, it's funny because people keep talking about, you know, Russia. They're like, "Ah, yes, but we're crippling the Russian economy because Russia, for the first time, had to stop exporting diesel." It's not for the first time, actually. They stopped exporting diesel last year.

I think they stopped exporting diesel the year before because, I mean, when Ukrainian drones hit Russian refineries, you know, that does create a temporary hiccup, and Russia has to adjust to it by making sure that all of the Russian combines have diesel. Pro tip: all the Russian combines have diesel. All the Russian trucks have diesel. There's no diesel shortage in Russia. They just stopped exporting diesel abroad. But this, you know, of course, bankrupted Russia and the Russian oil

companies because, you know, if you're not selling diesel, you're not making any money. No, because Russia's still producing a lot of oil. So what it's done at a time because of the global energy crisis brought on by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, when everybody needs oil.

Russia now, all that oil that Russia was supposed to convert into diesel for export, they're just selling that oil. And they're actually making a lot more money, 60% more profits last month, or the month of July, than in 2025. And the same profit increase level applies for August. And I think you'll see that it applies for September as well. Russia just has a lot of oil to sell on the market now because they're not running it through refineries, because the refineries are non-operational. But once the Russians get the refineries up, I think Vladimir Putin said that only 10% of Russian refining capacity is down now. That's down from like 40%, and they're going to fix these relatively soon. That means Russia's up cranking stuff out, which means they're going to be producing diesel again and gasoline.

And the shortage is, you know, Russia isn't the United States, too. Russia has strategic reserves that they've barely tapped into because Russia thinks Russia's prepared, just like the Chinese. I love all the people: "The Chinese economy is going to collapse because they're running out of oil." And then it turns out that China actually has strategic oil reserves that are beyond China's imagination, unlike ours. And China will never run out of oil anytime soon because while their strategic reserves are mitigating some offset from, you know, denied access to Iranian oil, Russia's building pipelines and Russia's pumping oil into China. So it's the Western economy that will collapse far before Iranian, the Russian, the Chinese economy.

#Danny

Yeah, well, it's looking very bad. And then there's also, Scott, well, I showed the report about how the U.S. military intelligence apparatus, they are jointly, or maybe not so jointly, trying to figure out a way to reduce presence in the Middle East and West Asia because of what's happened in this war on Iran. But then there's a war that is starting to escalate quite dramatically, and it's the U.S.-backed Saudi war on Yemen, which is now having quite a negative impact on oil markets itself, with oil refineries in the southern Saudi Arabia area bordering Yemen getting hit very hard last night, including a Rampage oil facility in Jizan. There were, I think, 70 casualties in these Yemeni strikes. And what's your reaction to this? It seems like the Trump administration is trying to contain its own escalation with Iran, but yet you have now another war proliferating, which has a direct impact on oil too. I mean, Saudi Arabia is the petrodollar kingdom, I thought. Your thoughts? Well, it was. Yeah, it was.

#Scott Ritter

That's what the future holds. We have yet to see. But no, I mean, Yemen's always been warning the Saudis about escalation. And, you know, the Yemenis, like the Iranians, you know, aren't looking to expand this war beyond that necessary. But when Saudi Arabia imposes a blockade on Yemen, Yemen will return the favor. When Saudi Arabia starts either directly attacking Yemeni infrastructure

or using proxies—there's a lot of Saudi money pouring in to support Yemeni tribes to rise up against Ansar Allah—Yemen will respond in kind. And I think, you know, they found the soft spot. The way to get the Saudis to stop messing around is to hit the Saudis where it hurts, which is their strategic pocketbooks. And that is the, you know, the income that's derived from the production and sale of oil in Saudi Arabia. And I think Yemen has, you know, found that weak spot, and they're putting their thumb on it and squeezing a little bit. And let's see how long the Saudis can take this pain. My guess is not very long.

#Danny

Yeah, I've been surprised that it's lasted this long, to be quite honest, just given the fact that there is so much pressure on the oil markets already, especially leading into this holiday season, which appears to be quickly becoming a disaster already for the Trump administration. Scott, what have you made of the reports about the U.S. wanting to reduce the size of its presence in the Middle East? We had Kushner and Witkoff visiting Russia, claiming they want to end the Ukraine conflict. It didn't seem like much was actually achieved during those talks. But nevertheless, there are talks about reducing U.S. presence in all kinds of ways, yet still much escalation, still a naval blockade on Iran, and of course, still a conflict that the United States faces, given it's the top NATO leader still engaging with Ukraine. So what do you make of these reports of the U.S. reducing its military presence as we see escalations all across the map here?

#Scott Ritter

Well, let's go back to November 2025, I believe, when the Trump administration published its national security strategy document. And in that document, the United States talked about basically, from a strategic standpoint, it's going to be collapsing upon the Western Hemisphere. This can become Fortress America, and also engaging in the Indo-Pacific, where we would seek to manage Chinese expansion with total conventional overmatch. But we were looking to disengage from Europe, and we were looking to disentangle ourselves from endless wars and conflicts in the Middle East. So this has been the strategic objective of the United States. Of course, we had a little bit of a deviation there when Trump went crazy on February 28th of this year.

And together with Israel launched a surprise attack against Iran. And we've been paying the price ever since. But Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, I believe, Colby, was in Europe talking to Mark Rutte, trying to sell what they call NATO 3.0, which is basically a European-led NATO where the United States provides some sort of nuclear deterrent umbrella, but not much else. But he basically acknowledged that the United States is seeking to disengage from Europe, still in the Middle East, to focus on the strategic priorities of the Trump administration, which haven't changed. So I do think that we're looking at the reality that whatever posture we enjoy in the Middle East or in West Asia going forward is not going to be the posture that we had.

Bahrain's finished. I think you're going to see Kuwait's finished. I think you're going to see Qatar, Al Udeid Air Base, is finished. Many of our bases in the United Arab Emirates are finished. They've been struck. They can't function until they're rebuilt. And to rebuild them is going to cost hundreds of billions of dollars. And then once we rebuild them, we can't defend them. We're out of missiles. And then even if we get the missiles, the Iranians have proved that they can basically exhaust our defensive missiles and then wear us down and beat us. So I think basically, the United States has already made the strategic decision that it's pulling back and pulling out of the region.

#Danny

And to your point, the satellite imagery is very damning, even in recent strikes, because we have to remember, everybody, that Iran and the United States engaged in strikes as recently as last week. And in these strikes, Kuwait was targeted. And now we have satellite imagery that there's even more damage to Kuwait—the, what is it called, the Ali Al Salem Air Base there. And of course, this isn't restricted to Kuwait. Jordan has come under fire, and that's essentially, I believe, Scott, right, the last layer of defense before Israel when it comes to the U.S.'s posture along this part of the Persian Gulf in West Asia. So, your final thoughts on this before we move on.

#Scott Ritter

Well, I mean, if you want to see the direction it's going, I think it was last week. If you remember, the United States launched a series of air attacks on, I think, Sirnak Island in the Strait of Hormuz area. One of these struck a wedding party. It's the infamous attack that hit the wedding party. But these were supposed to be preparatory fires to basically soften the region up for something. That something was supposed to be, I believe, a raid carried out by a Marine battalion landing team supported by Joint Special Operations Forces who had gathered in a facility in Jordan. And how did Iran respond to the bombing of Sirnak? They struck Jordan, including this base. Apparently, one of their new large missiles impacted dead center on this base. We don't know anything about casualties, but we do know that many helicopters were destroyed.

This was supposed to be a helicopter-borne assault, so when you lose helicopters, it's hard to move troops. And the other helicopters were seen being evacuated to Israel, and now it seems that these troops are also being evacuated out of harm's way. This is just proof of the United States moving in a direction that's the opposite of seeking to build up military power to continue to hold Iran accountable, or whatever terms we want to use to justify our own illegal war of aggression. But I just think this points to the fact that the United States has lost this war, and we just are having a hard time accepting that. This is like a guy losing his girlfriend and still buying her flowers. No, she's done, man. She's done with you. She's just not that into you. And Iran is just not that into America. America is just not that into the region anymore. We can't afford to stay there. We lost.

#Danny

I think this is why, too, there were so many. And here's some of the imagery that came out of the base during Iran's surprise attack just four or five days ago. And I think this is why it was so surprising that Donald Trump and the administration did go into such a heavy war, a full-scale, or at least a full-scale war short of U.S. troops on the ground, with Iran. I think it caught a lot by surprise, given that there's been a trend over the last several decades of trying to get away from this, given how disastrous even the most destructive and maybe you could say, quote-unquote, successful, depending on your measure of success, campaigns by the United States against smaller countries, weaker militaries, et cetera, in Iraq, for example.

Scott, now your thoughts on the Ukraine situation. I know many of our friends are in Russia right now. I know that there are a lot of developments happening with regard to the conflict. Lots of strange reports, of course. Ukraine intel reports of massive Russian mobilization coming, 600,000 troops, more strikes on Kyiv. And then also talks of Germany—Germany, lots of hostile rhetoric, lots of hostile moves after this drone on what was at the Leipzig airport that was claimed to be a Russian strike. And even Lavrov has said that Germany is fast moving toward war with Russia. What do you make of the developments in the Ukraine conflict? How do they affect this whole picture now? Because this conflict, even some in the mainstream media are admitting, is not going well after Witkoff and Kushner's visit to Moscow.

#Scott Ritter

Well, pro tip, it wasn't going well before Witkoff's trip to Moscow. Look, just today we had a phone call between President Trump and President Putin, a confidential phone call, one hour long. The only word we have from it is Ushakov, advisor to Vladimir Putin, about, you know, the Americans, you know, basically saying that Donald Trump is very interested in, you know, bringing an end to the conflict before the end of his presidency. It's two years away, guys, so anybody thinking this could happen overnight. But this also builds upon the meeting of Kushner and Witkoff in Moscow, which everybody said was a good meeting.

You didn't see anything negative coming out of this from the Witkoff and Kushner side, followed by their trip to Kyiv, where they had to sit down with a man who was clearly under the influence of something—that is, the ostensible president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky—who's put forward nothing but, again, cocaine-induced fantasy about what Ukraine needs, what Ukraine wants, what Ukraine is going to achieve. The reality, though, and this was according to some reports, you know, made clear to Kushner and Witkoff by Vladimir Putin in very stark terms, the reality of the situation is Ukraine is losing on all fronts. They're getting destroyed on the front lines.

There's reports of, you know, some 2,500 Ukrainians are surrounded near Kharkov. 1,300 of them have already been made casualties. You know, and this is a huge loss. That's nearly 5,000 Ukrainian soldiers, you know, frontline fighters wiped off. So, Kyrylo Budanov, you said 30,000 you're going to need to keep the status quo. I think you're probably looking closer to 40 or 50,000 by the time this

is done. And there's no status quo because they're just going to keep dying, and you can't replace them. This is the reality on the front lines. You know, Russia is winning decisively. Twenty-three Iskander-M missiles hitting Kyiv last night, together with drones and other weapon systems.

There's no air defense. There's no economy. The economy is collapsing. Odessa is closed. The Black Sea is closed. Crops from the field are not getting harvested. Seventy-one percent of the Ukrainian economy is linked to these crops. They're not going anywhere. You know, their industrial base that was being built up to support this drone offensive. I mean, you take a look at the targets that Russia has been hitting over the course of the past several weeks there. It's the total capacity of drone production that's going down—drone warehouses, all other warehouses, all supply distribution centers, the whole thing. Russia's just taking it out.

And meanwhile, Zelensky is, um, you know, the noose is closing in around him. You know, this NABU, you know, corruption investigation unit, is starting to, you know, get closer and closer to Zelensky. Everybody knows Zelensky's guilty, but they're running out of political will to protect him. And I think the United States is, you know, pretty much sending the signal that the world isn't long with Zelensky in it. You know, for the first time, you know, the Russians put forward the demand for new elections as a prerequisite for conflict termination. The United States didn't say no to the concept.

This means that Zelensky's finished. Zelensky won't be part of a post-war government. The Ukrainian army has to shrink. This is a reality. Ukraine's not happy with that, but this is one of the realities, and so on and so forth. But we have to weigh in opposition to any notion that Kushner and Witkoff are promoting the Russian cause, that the CIA is still carrying out covert operations against Ukraine to include facilitating long-range drone strikes for the sole purpose of killing Russians. This is what the CIA does. It's their mission. Donald Trump continues to support European nations by facilitating their purchase of U.S. weaponry that's sent on to Ukraine for the purpose of killing Russians.

The United States policy, strategic policy, continues to be the strategic defeat of Russia. They're trying to create economic conditions in Russia conducive to the rising up of a Moscow Maidan movement that would see Vladimir Putin destroyed. So, you know, this talk of peace, it's not a serious talk of peace. But then again, this talk of war isn't serious either. You mentioned the Leipzig drone. I mean, we don't know much about this drone, but I would say that if it was truly a Russian false flag, it should be about as easy to demonstrate that as possible. Like, release the technical details of this drone. What kind of power plant was it running? What was the fuel capacity?

How big was the payload they were carrying? Where were the motors made? What was the frequency of the receiving unit? What kind of camera optics was it? All these things come in. If you're going to say Russia did it, you have to show the weapon. You have to present the evidence. You have to show something. What we saw was a sick drone that could barely get off the ground. We don't even know if there was a functioning camera system on it. We just know the driver came

out and basically kicked it to the ground, and that was that. This wasn't serious. If Russia were serious about attacking an aircraft, they would have used a functioning drone. This is a non-functioning drone.

And if this was a real false flag, meaning that it's Ukrainian intelligence or European intelligence trying to create the notion of Russian aggression, then they would have killed people, not just have a sick drone hovering over the ground. This is, I think, more about manipulating the election inside Germany, creating the notion that anybody who supports Trump, supports Russia, or supports AfD, Alternative für Deutschland, supports, you know, the Russians attacking the airfield at Leipzig. But this isn't serious, nor is Europe's threat of war, Germany's threat of war. As we speak right now, Germany can't get a brigade out of the barracks that is capable of deploying.

#Scott Ritter

Can't do it.

#Scott Ritter

The British can't get a brigade, a brigade across the Channel. Can't do it. The French can't get a brigade out of their homeland. They can't do it. These are the three major powers talking about, you know, how they're going to come together in a coalition of the willing, stand up to the Russians, et cetera. There's just no ability to project power by the Europeans today. Germany, especially Germany, is supposed to mobilize over 400,000 men over the course of the next several years to get an army capable of fighting the Russians. They sent out letters to 300,000 Germans of draft age, asking them, "Would you like to volunteer for this new army?"

253 people wrote back and said yes. 253 out of 300,000. There's no desire in Germany to go to war against Russia, especially when Russia's not attacking. One of the points that the Russians made to Witkoff and Kushner was that there's just literally no desire on the part of Russia to escalate things so that there's a conflict with Europe. This is just European psychological operations, not against Russia, against themselves. This is how they convince a population to continue to support funding for a war machine that, as I said, will never be capable of doing anything.

#Danny

Well, a lot of this depends on the United States, right, Scott? Because what I found so striking about both of these conflicts now, Iran and Ukraine, is that there are some overlapping problems and crises on the military front. And one of them, too, is what you said earlier when you were speaking about what Russia is doing. Russia and Iran are deploying these newer missiles, these hypersonic missiles, these missiles that are impossible to stop, it seems like, for air defenses. And air defenses are not even available anymore. It seems that Ukraine keeps begging for more, but they're not going to come. So what do you make of this in a broad sense, in terms of the war situation globally,

and how the U.S. is really a huge factor here, and why things are seemingly going south on all of these fronts?

#Scott Ritter

You know, I think Russia has been, you know, playing a strategic game. When I say game, let's just say that they've been thinking strategically. You know, people like myself have been saying, "Why isn't Russia responding more decisively? Why aren't they doing this? You know, they should have done this years ago." But then when you actually take a pause, take a deep breath, and think, there's many things that Russia couldn't do years ago without certainty of knowledge of outcome. I mean, you know, Russia's not—Vladimir Putin's not a guy that gets up every day and goes, "How can I gamble away the future of Russia? What can I do to really just put Russia in a bind?"

He wakes up every day saying, "How can I guarantee successful outcomes for the Russian people?" You know, this is how he operates. And so when we take a look at what's going on, you know, with Ukraine, several things had to happen here. One, a war of attrition had to get to a critical point. You know, I don't think many people understood the—you know, we all heard Lindsey Graham say, "Fight to the last Ukrainian," but how many people truly believed that the Ukrainians would allow this to happen? Because what Ukraine is facing today is an extinction-level event. You know, over a million dead soldiers, millions wounded, you know, unsustainable to the point now that they're talking about drafting women. But why is this—what is this thing about women?

For the last several years, Ukraine's—when the war started in 2022, I think that in 2020, basically, if you compared Ukraine's live births with their recorded deaths, basically Ukraine, a population at that time of over 50 million, was bleeding out about 184,000 lives a year. So their population was dropping 184,000 lives per year. Boom, boom, boom. Then the war started, and you saw this suddenly become a three-to-one situation. You know, ratio where, you know, they're suddenly bleeding out. Plus, they have people fleeing, millions fleeing. Today, the population of Ukraine stands at a little more than 20 million. But the death figures in the first half of 2026: 76,000 to 78,000 live births and four times as many recorded deaths. And these deaths don't include what's happened on the battlefield. So four to one.

So you have a four-to-one ratio between dead people and newborns, the replacements. Societies can't survive unless you have like a 2.1, 2.3 replacement factor, meaning that for everybody who dies, you need 2.1 more to be born because kids don't make it through or whatever. But the point is, that's how you grow as a society. Right now, Ukraine was shrinking, and now they're really shrinking. It's a total collapse. The only thing that could reverse this outcome is if Ukrainian women give birth to more babies. But now they want to draft Ukrainian women, the only regeneration capacity they have. This is an existential—this is an extinction-level event taking place for Ukraine.

Ukraine is literally dying before our very eyes. Nobody in the West truly believed that Ukraine was capable of self-immolation, this collective desire to commit suicide. And yet that's what it's doing.

Rationally, should have gone, but the Ukrainians are willing to kill everybody to keep this myth of Ukrainian resistance alive. Air defense: the United States, together with Europe, had built a very robust integrated air defense system that Russia had been seeking to dismantle since the fall of 2022. And we in the West have poured in billions of dollars' worth of air defense systems, including a lot of PAC-3 Patriots and things of this nature. It didn't.

It didn't keep the Russians out, but it did mitigate against the harm that Russia could do. So one of the things that Russia has been doing is seeking to wear the Ukrainian air defense down. The Russians have been effective in killing some units, but it's a good air defense. And what's the best way to bring an air defense down to zero? Run out of missiles. And that's where we're at right now. The Ukrainians have run out of the missiles necessary to interdict Russia's most high-capacity systems. So now Russia is able to lay waste to the totality of Ukraine without any Ukrainian ability to defend itself. So this is a new development as well. On the battlefield, the Russians have perfected drone-based warfare.

They have tactics that are adapted to this, and they have solved the Ukrainian drone problem, that Russia is better at killing Ukrainian drone operators than Ukrainian drone operators are at killing Russians. And so we're seeing advances across the whole scope and breadth of this front, to include in Kharkiv, where the Russians have reportedly surrounded 2,500 of Ukraine's better troops after killing 1,300 of them. You know, so this conflict on Europe—I mean, Europe is just totally bankrupt, totally bankrupt. So, so much so that any rational actor who examines Europe as a—you know, Europe's defense industrial capacity and their ability to build the militaries that they talk about needing to confront Russia.

There's not a single rational analyst who can sit here and say that the European threat to rebuild their military capacity is a real threat. Germany can't do it. They're losing 300, 600 jobs a day. Their industrial base is collapsing. And the other thing is politically now, with Alternative für Deutschland doing so well in the regional elections, Merz's future is murky. There's some people who believe he won't last a year. There's other people who believe that he may go into early next year, but then he's gone. And when he's gone, what will replace it? People who want to continue the failed policies that got Merz thrown out, or people who want to move in a different political direction.

Then those people who want to move in a different political direction are, you know, Alternative für Deutschland, which means that's the end of this big German push for militarization and going to war against Russia, which is never going to happen to begin with. Always has been a political ploy, but at least it dies. The same thing in France. Macron is out on April 18th. Marine Le Pen is likely to be the next president of France, although one always hesitates to call an election this far out. But the bottom line is that France is headed in a direction different from the policy direction it currently enjoys with the unmitigated support for Ukraine.

England is falling apart as we speak. And so the ability to sustain the Ukrainians, we had—you know, Mikhail Fedorov was the defense minister, you know, got appointed in January of this year, got fired

in July. He's the one sort of behind the most recent drone push. But one of the reasons why the Ukrainians were able to push drones as much as they could in April, May, June, July was that Fedorov stole \$27 billion, which was supposed to fund the Ukrainian military Defense Ministry for the second half of 2026. He took that money and bought drones with it in the first half. Now all those drones are gone, and he's got no money this year.

So they're bankrupt. They're running around. These are all the factors that came in. None of this happened in a vacuum. None of this happened by accident. These are all outcomes of policy decisions made by the Russians on a broad spectrum of issues that have now come together in a culminating moment that, you know, sees Russia on the ascendancy and Ukraine on the descendancy, and the West unable to support Ukraine. So, you know, this, I think, is deliberate. The collapse we're seeing is a desired result of deliberate Russian action.

#Danny

And Scott, maybe we have 15 minutes or so. Maybe we can talk about the larger implications now, where not only this war is going, but also the Iran front and just in general, the world order. Just yesterday, I'll pull it up in a second—I mean, Trump, pull it up in a second—he posted on Truth Social that gas prices will go down, everything will go down when we declare the Iran war has been won.

And I'm wondering if you believe that, with all these crises that we just went over on the Iran front and also on the front of Russia's special military operation against Ukraine, whether you believe still, because we've been talking about this for a while, that Trump will try to declare some kind of resolution, victory with Iran, maybe some kind of victory for the U.S. side when it comes to resolving the Ukraine conflict, and try to walk away from both before the midterms, which is really in just a couple months. And the situation is looking incredibly bleak. I mean, I don't think it could look any bleaker for the Trump administration and the GOP going into that. So, your thoughts on this? Well,

#Scott Ritter

You and I have been talking about the midterms and the impact that would have on policy for some time now. And here you're seeing some of the factors. I've said this before, and I'll say it again. James Carville got it right when he put a Post-it note on the door of the war room of the Clinton campaign back in 1992, reminding the president and others not to get engaged in foreign policy discussions. It's the economy, stupid. And when Americans go to the polls in November, they're not going to be talking about Ukraine. They're not going to be talking about peace with Russia. They're going to be talking about the economy, how much money they're paying for gas, how much money they're paying for this. And so it is the economy, stupid.

So now you see Trump wanting to get gas down. He's hedging now. He's basically saying, you know, I will eventually get the price of oil down, but maybe not in the timeframe necessary to have an

impact on November. So Americans, just work with me on this one. Let's be patient. This is not normally the way politicians like to operate. They prefer to have the votes counted beforehand, if you know what I mean, meaning that they've done everything they could to guarantee certain electoral outcomes. But now you have to say, why is Trump willing to leave the issue of oil prices unresolved by November? And that's the direction we're heading in right now. It doesn't seem he's going to be able to reverse it. You know, there's some interesting things happening domestically.

We have seen over the course of a year and a half, two years, Republican legislatures gerrymander, you know, voting districts to keep the Republicans in power. What you and I have been saying, that the Russians—not the Russians, the Republicans—all the Democrats are saying the same thing: Republicans are Russians. But that the Republicans are going to have a hard time holding on to the House. And yet now, thanks to this gerrymandering, it actually looks like the Russians—the Republicans—aren't going to have as hard a time holding on to the House as everybody thought they could. And then there's other things. Seymour Hersh has published a very interesting article, which expands on the concept of continuity of government.

You know, COG, he calls it. It's basically, you know, we've always had continuity of government plans in place. What happens if, you know, the Russians nuke Washington, D.C., and, you know, the president dies? You know, we have that person that's, you know, the last survivor, whether he becomes president or she. And then how do they govern? You know, Congress is gone forever. They govern through what are known as presidential emergency action directives. And these have already been written by Congress, the PEADs. And they're already law. The president can invoke PEADs anytime he wants to. It was meant to be, you know, if a nuclear bomb goes off and there's an emergency, you can't, you know, wait for Congress, wait for this.

So if the president declares a state of emergency, then the president can invoke the PEADs and do things like suspend the Constitution, suspend the Supreme Court, things of that nature. And there's some people, you know, Seymour Hersh is of the belief that the president, if faced with the potential of an electoral defeat in November that could spell the end of his legacy, that he may invoke, you know, selectively invoke or in totality, the emergency action directives that allow him to seize control, severely diminish elections or do away with them altogether to basically anoint himself, you know, the military dictator of America, which might be another reason why he just doesn't seem to be so concerned about the economy, because he's not doing anything to actually keep the economy going.

He keeps saying you've got to suffer that short-term pain to keep Iran from having a nuclear weapon. Now, this also may be a way for him to be elevating things up. I don't know if we talked about this last time, but, you know, when Ratcliffe went to Moscow, some interesting things happened. The day before he went, the Secretary of Commerce made the statement out of the blue. Everybody was taken by surprise. The United States is not opposed to Iran having a very large and robust nuclear power program. Really? I thought it was a zero. Then Ratcliffe went to Moscow. The next day, Moscow signs a \$25 billion deal with Iran about nuclear power, which appears to be

positioning Iran to minimize its nuclear enrichment program to a degree that might be acceptable by the United States in exchange for Russia providing the reactors and the fuel.

We go back to the statement made by the Iranian prior speaker of the parliament when he visited Iraq last month. The Iranian, he said, we know that the Trump administration is looking for an elegant, face-saving way out of this war. And so maybe what Trump is doing is, again, by highlighting the importance of Iran will never have a nuclear bomb, setting himself up not just for victory, but for an expansive declaration of victory by saying that because of all the things I've done, I now have a nuclear deal with Iran, which is better, and allows him to declare victory and go away. And you combine that with the hardcore press that he's making today about war in Ukraine, you see there's a lot of politics at play.

#Danny

Yeah, Trump and Putin, I believe, just had a call, a long phone call, where it seems, often as I read Russian readouts around these, it seems like Putin's on the phone just telling him what is actually going on. And, you know, the U.S. readout is very simple: you just want the Ukraine conflict to end.

#Scott Ritter

To end before his presidency is over. That's two years. So it's different. This ain't a 48-hour demand. This is, I want it to be done by the time I leave office.

#Danny

Yeah, so very, very interesting developments, because Putin also gave Witkoff and Kushner quite a lot of time. I always—I have to hand it to Vladimir Putin. That seems like a very painful three hours to be in the same room as Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff for three hours. I'm not sure what you can say, what you could get through to those guys in that amount of time, but I'm sure Putin, being the talker that he is, commanded the floor. But, so we have about five minutes or so left. Anything you want to bring up, raise, that maybe that's been on your mind that we haven't been able to cover yet? Well, yeah, I'll bring up something called Kaliningrad. Kaliningrad is a Russian...

#Scott Ritter

An enclave, exclave, whatever you want to call it, in the Baltics. It used to be East Prussia. At the end of World War II, in the dismantlement of the Prussian establishment, Russia took over the Kaliningrad area and incorporated it into the Russian Federation. And today it's part of—it's an oblast, part of Russia. A lot of talk going on in the West lately about Kaliningrad. You see former commanding general of the U.S. forces in Europe, Christopher Donahue, saying earlier this year how

the United States could totally obliterate—or NATO could totally obliterate—Kaliningrad's ability to defend itself with a long-range strike capability. Now, the very capacity he was talking about that would have an impact on Kaliningrad failed in Iran.

So you have to put this into its proper perspective. But you've had Lithuanian diplomats talking about the necessity to invade and occupy Kaliningrad, to evict the Russians. You've had some Germans say that, yes, Germany should get Kaliningrad back. You have provocations taking place in the—you know, I think it was the Germans that once again published something where they released it in public, showing a war map that has NATO moving in on Kaliningrad. The bottom line is, the Baltic region is, you know, even if Ukraine is resolved in whatever fashion, the Baltic region will continue to exist as a very hot region, potential point of conflict that could lead to a broader war instantaneously, a nuclear war that kills us all.

The same thing with the Arctic. You know, you have China opening up the Northeast Passage, where now they're taking container ships out of China, sailing up around the, you know, the Arctic coast into Europe. A 20-day passage cuts in half the 40-day passage it goes the other way around. This is a game changer for moving cargo into Europe. You have Russia with 43 active icebreakers. I think eight are nuclear. They're building more, able to guarantee passage through. And you have Donald Trump talking about invading, occupying Greenland. There's an ability to project American power into the Arctic to prevent this kind of Chinese-Russian dominance. The Russians are building up their military forces.

The West is building up their military forces. NATO is holding very aggressive military maneuvers in the Arctic area. Another point of conflict that will survive well past Ukraine. You know, until we resolve the issue of U.S.-Russian relations and Europe's Russophobia that, you know, seeks this never-ending conflict with Russia, you're going to have issues like Kaliningrad and the Arctic come up. I think the people need to know more about these regions, need to understand this. I don't think everybody's so focused on Ukraine that nobody's talking about the Baltics, nobody's talking about the Arctic, and therefore governments get away with policies that they otherwise might not be.

So in order to push back, we have to empower people. What has been one of my primary missions going to Russia is to gather reality, the Russian reality, and bring it back to the West. So in two weeks' time, I'm going to be heading to Russia for the purpose of furthering my knowledge and understanding of the Baltics and the Arctic in terms of, you know, security questions. Try and capture that and bring it back. And I think this is essential. This is necessary. And again, I'll just make an appeal. I can't do this. I know I'm not supposed to read your comments there, Danny Haiphong, but there's a guy in there saying that I have to come clean about being on the Russian payroll and that I did something.

#Danny

Oh, geez.

#Scott Ritter

I did something in July. Tell him, Danny, you're supposed to ask me about what I did in July and who I received money from. What did I do in July? I don't know. I went to France in July. I know that I did that. And then I came back here and I continued to work my ass off. But I don't receive any money from Russia, and I don't receive money from Russia, and I will not receive money from Russia. And for all the people that might say, "Well, that's just you saying that, Scott," gosh, I do remember 40 FBI agents coming into my home, seizing all of my electronics, all of my documents, and, you know, with a subpoena that included all my financial records going back years. And today the FBI isn't doing jack shit because they found nothing, because I don't do anything wrong. Everything I do is clean. I'm not—I don't run a dirty, underhanded thing.

I'm an independent journalist. When I travel to Russia, I do so free of any outside influence. But my independence only comes through donations made by viewers. Your viewers have always—there's always been a good reaction after I come on your show and I make this appeal. So I'm making it once again. I'm about two-thirds of the way to fund this trip, and I just need one extra push. So any help that people can provide by going to my Substack page and going over to the donation button and hitting donations, you know, that'll help push me over to the top so that I can get the best benefit from this trip. I'm going no matter what, but to get the maximum benefit, we need the donations. But that's the direction I'm heading. There's a whole bunch of other stuff going.

I just came back from Switzerland, this great conference in Switzerland. And it just opened up a lot of doors. The more you do things, the more you meet people, and the more different doors open up. And so one of my problems is, you know, you're always afraid of, well, I'm going to hit a really slow time. My problem right now is I have too many things that need to be done and not enough time and not enough energy. But the most pressing thing right now is getting this trip to Russia done. If you thought my June trip was productive—and it was very productive—you know, I'm sitting here talking about drones only because I went there and met with Russian drone operators and stuff.

Baltic-Arctic trip has the potential to be even more productive. So anything people can do to support me, it'd be great. Anything people can do to support you, Danny, keep you going too. I mean, this is, you know, Danny and I are part of what we've called over the course of several years now the family of podcasts. And we have different podcasters who all come together on occasion, but we support one another. And what this means, just so people understand, is that when people want to get a message out, if you have this network, we can get a message seen by 5, 10, 15 million people. You know, that swamps anything the mainstream media does. And I don't even like calling them mainstream media anymore.

We call them corporate-controlled media. You know, Fox, on their best day, you know, gets a million. But if, you know, we've had ideas go out there when we were doing the whole anti-nuclear war campaign, we were getting that message out to millions of people. And so we need to keep, you

know, Danny up and running. We need to keep Garland Nixon up and running, Judge Napolitano up and running. We need to keep everybody, Max Blumenthal, up and running so that we have the potential in independent journalism to get a message out there in a more efficient, effective fashion than corporate-controlled media. So I would encourage people to support Danny.

#Danny

I really appreciate that, Scott. And here is Scott's website, his Substack, which you can go to in the video description below and provide that support. I want to make sure everybody knows, too, that the entire operation is clean. I've received emails over the years, ever since Scott was raided by Google itself, talking about how my records, my contacts, all of this from my Google accounts, likely YouTube and Gmail, were taken because probably of this raid. And they never came after me either. So it looks like you're looking at a completely clean operation, one that they can't even pin something on.

So just know that you are truly supporting independent media, and independent media that is harassed, watched over, surveilled, and not friends of those who run platforms such as these. So you should definitely consider supporting Scott as you end here. And one of the free ways you can do that, of course, is hitting the like button so more people can hear this and more people can ensure they hear about ways to support Scott. All right, everybody, hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show and YouTube's algorithm. I'll be back tomorrow with Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson and Patrick Henningsen. I'll let you know when that is. It's 1 p.m. Eastern time. Until next time, I'll see you all again tomorrow. Bye-bye.